

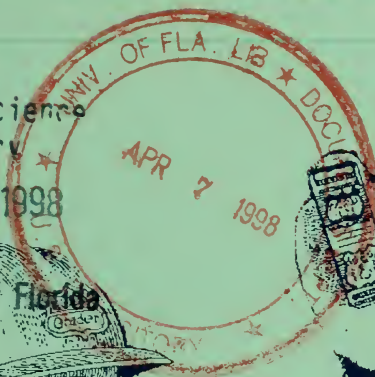
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# Livestock and Seed Program

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United States Department of  
Agriculture

Agricultural  
Marketing  
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In the 135 years since its creation, the Department of Agriculture has touched the lives of millions of people—both in the United States and abroad. During the early years, the Department was concerned primarily with agricultural production, and in 1913, it became involved in the marketing of farm products. About that time, what is now the Livestock and Seed Program came into existence as the Livestock, Meats, and Wool Division, a part of the Bureau of Markets. In 1922, the Bureau of Markets was combined with another bureau to form the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, which itself was incorporated into the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), in 1939.

Even though the organizational structure of the Program's parent agency has changed frequently over the years, the Program's primary objective has remained virtually constant: to provide timely, high-quality, and unbiased service that facilitates the orderly marketing and distribution of agricultural commodities while simultaneously fostering goodwill in the global marketplace. This high-quality service is maintained through the Program's continual commitment to improve its operating procedures to meet customer needs and to incorporate in its services new research findings and technological advancements.

The Program's objectives are accomplished by the:

- Office of the Deputy Administrator,
- Administrative Group,
- Program Review and Resource Management Staff,
- Commodity Procurement Branch,
- Livestock and Grain Market News Branch,
- Livestock and Meat Standardization Branch,
- Marketing Programs Branch,
- Meat Grading and Certification Branch, and
- Seed and Regulatory Testing Branch.



Like many of its sister programs in AMS, the Livestock and Seed Program provides services that are funded primarily by user fees—an increasingly common way for the Federal Government to conduct program activities. Approximately 80 percent of the Program's funds are derived from payments made by users of Program services. Only the remaining 20 percent is appropriated by Congress.

Although the Program is headquartered in Washington, DC, it maintains offices throughout the United States to serve the agricultural community and industry. The Program seeks to establish and maintain effective working relationships with consumers, producers, trade organizations, industry groups, and other Government agencies.

## **Commodity Procurement Branch**

**T**he Commodity Procurement Branch purchases red meat and fish items for distribution by USDA to Federal feeding program recipients. These purchases (1) support agricultural markets, particularly when surpluses exist; (2) safeguard the health and well-being of our Nation's children by distributing nutritious commodities through the National School Lunch Program; and (3) provide food to the elderly, Native Americans on reservations, needy families, and others through charitable organizations.

The Branch buys a variety of products such as frozen beef roasts, ground beef, ground beef patties; beef and pork or further processing; ground pork; smoked fully cooked hams; canned meat products, tuna, and salmon.





In accordance with Federal acquisition requirements, the Branch prepares solicitations for bids, evaluate offers, and award contracts; and conducts economic assessments of the livestock and seafood industries.


Through these purchase programs, the Branch assists farmers, commodity producers, and processors by helping maintain stable prices. Equally important, the purchases provide economical and healthy meals for school children, the elderly, Native Americans on reservations, needy families, and the homeless.

To obtain additional information, call (202) 720-2650 or visit our site at [www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/lc-cp.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/lc-cp.htm)

## **Livestock and Grain Market News Branch**

**T**he Livestock and Grain Market News Branch's purpose—originally stated in the 1914 appropriation act (which first provided for market news)—is "...to acquire and to diffuse among the people of the United States useful information on subjects connected with the marketing and distribution of farm products." More specifically, the Branch releases current, reliable, objective information on marketing conditions affecting livestock, meats, grain, hay, and wool. Professional market reporters collect information and disseminate reports intended to provide buyers and sellers with the information necessary to make informed marketing decisions, thus placing everyone in the marketing system on an equal basis. These reporters cover direct livestock sales, terminal and auction markets, and grain elevators. They also collect information in person and by telephone, talking with buyers, producers, and feedlot operators. They travel within their trade areas to observe livestock in feedlots, on farms, ranches, and in packer holding pens. Meat products are observed in meat coolers.





The information collected by reporters is included in reports that are available to all interested parties. These reports provide data on carlot meat sales; fabricated boxed beef and pork sales (which are tabulated for the beef and pork carcass cut-out value); weekly wool and mohair sales, grain, and feed sales; sales of cattle, hogs, sheep, and lambs; and weighted average calculations.

The Market News Branch continually adapts to changing industry needs. This flexibility helps the Branch maintain its commitment to provide up-to-date, reliable market information for feeders, producers, growers, and packers.

More detailed information can be obtained from our brochure entitled "The Market News Service On Livestock, Meat, Grain, And Wool," at [www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/lm-mn.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/lm-mn.htm), or by calling (202) 720-6231.

## **Livestock and Meat Standardization Branch**

**T**he Standardization Branch develops, promulgates, and revises the official U.S. grade standards for live animals and carcasses from the red meat species. Also, the Branch performs a similar function for Institutional Meat Purchase Specifications, Federal, and non-Federal specifications used to procure red meats. The meat grade standards and various meat purchase specifications, widely used by industry to market meat and meat products, serve as a guide for consumers who want to buy high-quality meat. Live grade standards are used as a reference for trading and reporting on the hog, cattle, and sheep markets and also for settling futures contracts. Standards and specifications form the basis of the Livestock and Seed Program's meat grading and certification, market news, and Federal red meat procurement programs. The Standardization Branch also provides training for livestock and meat industry individuals and companies wishing to develop quality management programs to verify claims for product quality and other characteristics. These programs can be submitted to the Meat Grading and Certification Branch for verification and auditing to substantiate the claims on product labels or in marketing programs.



The Standardization Branch's work benefits virtually all Americans, including college students, school children, soldiers, and hospital patients. One result is that consumers can buy USDA Prime beef in a restaurant or USDA Choice lamb in a meat market with confidence in the quality of the meat. In addition, the Branch's services help Federal, State, and local institutions purchase red meat products that comply with contractual requirements.

The Branch's technical personnel participate in research projects conducted by land-grant universities, and they demonstrate live animal and carcass evaluations at livestock shows and meat judging contests. Frequently, Branch staff members respond to producer, packer, and consumer questions on grade standards and meat purchase specifications.

Through its services, the Standardization Branch provides a quality guide for consumers of livestock, meat, and related products, while also managing the Program's link to research, academia, and animal and meat science students.

To obtain additional information, call (202) 720-4486 or visit our site at [www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/lb-st.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/lb-st.htm)

## Marketing Programs Branch

**T**he Marketing Programs Branch implements, coordinates, and monitors federally legislated (industry-administered) promotion and research programs for beef, pork, soybeans, mohair, wool, and lamb. These industry-funded (check-off) programs operate under promotion and research orders or agreements issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.

The beef, pork, soybean, wool/lamb, and mohair check-off programs generate over \$200 million annually in assessments collected from producers or growers. These funds finance a variety of programs including advertising; consumer education; nutrition, production, and marketing research; and new product and foreign market development.



Commodity “check-off” programs are designed to strengthen the position of each respective commodity in the marketplace by increasing domestic demand and consumption and by expanding foreign markets for these commodities.

To obtain additional information, call (202) 720-1115 or visit our site at [www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/mpb/l srp.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/mpb/l srp.htm)

## **Meat Grading and Certification Branch**

**S**ince 1923, the Meat Grading and Certification Branch has served the livestock and meat industry by providing (on request) grading and certification services for beef, lamb, pork, veal, and calf. These services, provided on a fee-for-service basis, facilitate the orderly marketing of meats and meat products, thus effectively assisting livestock producers, feeders, processors, and consumers.

Under the meat grading service, quality and/or yield grades (determined according to written standards) are applied to beef, lamb, pork, veal, and calf carcasses. Meat retailers and wholesalers and members of the hotel and restaurant industry use USDA grades as a value guideline and a marketing tool. Quality grades also are helpful to consumers in determining meat palatability.

Under the certification service, meat and meat products are officially accepted according to detailed specification requirements. This service ensures that volume meat product purchasers—such as Federal, State, international, and local agencies—receive products that comply with specifications and contractual requirements. Many hospitals, schools, State institutions, the Department of Defense, and USDA itself (in the Federal School Lunch Program) use this service to secure





uniform, high-quality, nutritionally sound products for our troops, students, and hospital patients.

The Meat Grading and Certification Branch provides quality system auditing and registration services to livestock and meat companies that wish to have their quality management programs verified and registered by an agency of the Federal government. Registered companies use this third-party verification to assure their customers that they are capable of providing a consistent quality product.

Through its carcass information services, the Branch also provides grade and grade factor evaluations for livestock feeders and producers. Branch employees work with youth organizations, university staff, and consumer groups to educate and explain the usefulness of meat grading in the marketplace.

More detailed information can be obtained from our brochure entitled "USDA Meat Grading And Certification Service," at [www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/lsg-mg.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/lsg-mg.htm), or by calling (202) 720-1113.

## Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch

**T**he Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch (located in Beltsville, Maryland) enforces interstate commerce provisions of the Federal Seed Act (FSA) and provides seed testing under the Agricultural Marketing Act (AMA).

The FSA regulates the interstate shipment of agricultural and vegetable seeds, requiring that seed shipped in interstate commerce be labeled with information that allows seed buyers to make informed choices. The labeling information and any advertisements pertaining to the seed must be truthful. The FSA helps promote uniformity among State laws and fair competition within the seed trade.

Complaints involving mislabeled seed are submitted to the Branch for investigation, and regulatory action is taken against the shipper, if appropriate. Although complaints may be submitted by anyone, most are presented by State seed control officials through existing cooperative agreements. State inspectors routinely inspect and sample seed shipments being marketed in their States. Information on interstate shipments found by the State to be mislabeled may be submitted to the Seed Regulatory and Testing Branch for investigation. Branch action on FSA



violations ranges from a letter of warning for first offenses, minor violations and technical violations to a monetary penalty minor violations, and technical violations, to a monetary penalty for serious violations.

The AMA provides for the testing of agricultural and vegetable seeds to bring about efficient, orderly marketing and to assist in the development of new or expanding markets. This voluntary service is available to anyone for a fee.

Seed samples submitted to the Branch's Testing Section may be checked, at the customer's request, for factors such as purity, germination, noxious weeds, and moisture. A Federal Seed Analysis Certificate is issued giving the test results. Many importing countries require this certification of U.S. seed and grain. The Testing Section is accredited by the International Seed Testing Association and recognized as an unbiased authority for conducting tests on export samples.

To obtain additional information, call (301) 504-9430 or visit our site at [www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/seed/lsg-sd.htm](http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/seed/lsg-sd.htm).



**T**he Livestock and Seed Program serves all segments of the livestock, meat, and seed trade, from the producer to the consumer. Understanding the importance of communication, Program employees make special efforts to keep industry members and the public informed about the benefits of our programs. Technical employees throughout the country—market reporters, graders, supervisors, officers-in-charge, Washington, DC, staff members—frequently appear before groups, industry, and public to explain program services.

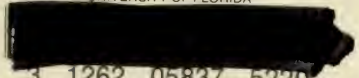
Additional information about Livestock and Seed Program services can be obtained from the Deputy Administrator, Livestock and Seed Program, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, STOP 0249, P.O. Box 96456, Room 2092-S, Washington, DC 20090-6456; at [www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/](http://www.ams.usda.gov/lsg/), or by calling (202) 720-5705.

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To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250, or call 1-800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

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